

Commaundeth me that it be so  
And if ther any aske me,  
Whether that it be he or she,  
How that this book the which is here  
Shal hote, that I rede you here;  
It is the Romance of the Rose,  
In which al the art of love I close.

**T**HE mater fair is of to make;  
God graunte in gree that she it take  
For whom that it begonnen is!  
And that is she that hath, ywis,  
So mochel prys; and therto she  
So worthy is biloved be,  
That she wel oughte, of prys and right,  
Be cleped Rose of every wight.

**T**HAT it was May me thoughte tho,  
It is fyve yere or more ago;  
That it was May, thus dremed me,  
In tyme of love and jolitee,  
That al thing ginneth waxen gay,  
For ther is neither busk nor hay

In May, that it nil shrouded been,  
And it with newe leves wreen.  
These wodes eek recoveren grene,  
That drye in winter been to sene;  
And the erthe wexeth proud withalle,  
For swote dewes that on it falle,  
And al the pore estat forget  
In which that winter hadde it set,  
And than bicometh the ground so proud  
That it wol have a newe shroud,  
And maketh so queynt his robe and fayr  
That it hath hewes an hundred payr  
Of gras and floures, inde and pers,  
And many hewes ful dyvers:

That is the robe I mene, ywis,  
Through which the ground to preisen is.

**T**HE briddes, that han left hir song,  
Whyl they han suffred cold so strong

In wedres grille, and derk to sighte,  
Ben in May, for the sonne brighte,

So glade, that they shewe in singing,  
That in hir herte is swich lyking,

That they mote singen and be light.  
Chan doth the nightingale hir might  
To make noyse, and syngen blythe.

Chan is blisful, many a sythe,  
The chelaundre and the papingay.

Chan yonge folk entenden ay  
for to ben gay and amorous,

The tyme is than so savorous.  
Hard is his herte that loveth nought  
In May, whan al this mirth is wrought;

Whan he may on these braunches here  
The smale briddes singen clere

Hir blisful swete song pitous;  
And in this sesoun delytous,

Whan love affrayeth alle thing,  
Me thoughte anight, in my sleping,

Right in my bed, ful redily,  
That it was by the morowe erly,

And up I roos, and gan me clothe;  
Anoon I wissh myn bondes bothe;

A sylvre nedle forth I drogh  
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Out of an aguiler queynt ynogh,  
And gan this nedle threde anon;  
for out of toun me list to gon  
The sowne of briddes for to here,  
That on thise bussches singen clere.  
And in the swete sesoun that leef is,  
With a threde basting my slevis,  
Aloon I wente in my playing,  
The smale foules song harking;  
That peyned hem ful many a payre  
To singe on bowes blosmed fayre.  
Jolif and gay, ful of gladnesse,  
Toward a river I gan me dresse,  
That I herde renne faste by;  
for fairer playing non saugh I  
Than playen me by that river,  
for from an hille that stood ther neer  
Cam down the stream ful stif and bold.  
Cleer was the water, and as cold  
As any welle is, sooth to seyne;  
And somdel lasse it was than Seine,  
But it was straighter wel away.  
And never saugh I, er that day,  
The water that so wel lyked me;  
And wonder glad was I to see  
That lusty place, and that riveer;  
And with that water that ran so cleer  
My face I wissh. Tho saugh I wel  
The botme paved everydel  
With gravel, ful of stones shene.  
The medewe softe, swote, and grene,  
Beet right on the watersyde.  
ful cleer was than the morowtyde,  
And ful attempre, out of drede.  
Tho gan I walke through the mede,  
Downward ay in my pleying,  
The riversyde costeying.

**A**ND whan I had a whyle  
goon,  
I saugh a Gardin right  
anoon,  
ful long and brood, and  
everydel  
Enclos it was, and walled  
wel,  
With hye walles enbat-  
ailed,

Portrayed without, and wel entailed  
With many riche portraitures;

And bothe images and peyntures  
Gan I biholde bisily.

And I wol telle you, redily,  
Of thilke images the semblaunce,

As fer as I have remembraunce.  
**A**MIDDE saugh I Hate stonde,

That for hir wrathe, ire, and onde,  
Semed to been a moveresse,

An angry wight, a chideresse;  
And ful of gyle, and fel corage,

By semblaunt was that ilke image.  
And she was nothing wel arrayed,

But lyk a wood womman afrayed;  
Yfrounced foule was hir visage,

And grenning for dispitous rage;



hir nose snorted up for tene.  
ful hidous was she for to sene,  
ful foul and rusty was she, this,  
hir heed ywripen was, ywis,  
ful grimly with a greet towayle.

**A**N image of another entayle, **felonye**  
A lift half, was hir faste by;  
hir name above hir heed saugh I,  
And she was called felonye.

**A**NOTHER image, that **Vilanye** **Vilanye**  
Vileped was, saugh I and fond  
Upon the walle on hir right bond.

Vilanye was lyk somdel  
That other image; and, trusteth wel,  
She semed a wikked creature.

By countenance, in portrayture,  
She semed be ful despitous,

And eek ful proud and outrageous.  
Wel coude he peynte, I undertake,

That swiche image coude make.  
ful foul and cherlish semed she,

And eek vilaynous for to be,  
And litel coude of norture,

To worshipec any creature.  
**Coveityse**

**A**N next was peynted Coveityse,  
Chat eggeth folk, in many gyse,

To take and yeve right nought ageyn,

And grete tresours up to leyn.  
And that is she that for usure

Leneth to many a creature  
The lasse for the more winning,

So coveitous is her brenning.  
And that is she, for penyes fete,

That techeth for to robbe and stele  
These theves, and these smale harlotes;

And that is routh, for by hir throtes  
ful many oon hangeth at the laste.

She maketh folk compasse and caste  
To taken other folkes thing,

Through robberie, or miscounting.  
And that is she that maketh trechoures;

And she that maketh false pledoures,  
That with hir termes and hir domes

Doon maydens, children, and eek gromes  
hir heritage to forgo.

ful croked were hir bondes two;  
for Coveityse is ever wood

To grypen other folkes good.  
Coveityse, for hir winning,

ful leef hath other mennes thing.

**A**NOTHER image set saugh I  
Next Coveityse faste by,

And she was cleped **Avarice**. **Avarice**  
ful foul in peynting was that vice;